



Testimony from
the American Cancer Society (ACS) and the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN)
to the 2018 Physical Activity Guidelines Advisory Committee

October 27, 2016

On behalf of the American Cancer Society (the Society) and the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN), thank you for the opportunity to provide comments today. The Society is a nationwide, community-based voluntary health organization dedicated to eliminating cancer as a major health problem. ACS CAN is the nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy affiliate of the Society.

We applaud the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for committing to update the *Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans* and are generally pleased with the direction of the Committee's work. In particular, we strongly support the Committee's intent to review the science on the connection between physical activity and cancer. Current evidence supports that regular physical activity directly reduces the risk of breast, colorectal, and endometrial cancers. It may also reduce the risk of many other types of cancer including kidney, esophageal adenocarcinoma, liver, stomach, head and neck, bladder, myeloid leukemia, non-Hodgkin lymphoma, and myeloma. Physical activity is associated with cancer risk directly through various mechanisms and indirectly by promoting weight management. For individuals living with cancer, physical activity also improves physical functioning and fatigue, and may even improve treatment response. Further, physical activity reduces the risk of recurrence and increases the chances of survival for certain cancers. The American Cancer Society currently advises individuals to follow the same recommendations as the 2008 *Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans*. The Society also recommends that cancer survivors engage in regular physical activity.

In addition to the link between physical activity and cancer, we support the Committee's intent to examine the relationship between physical activity and body weight. The Committee should explore the benefits of physical activity independent of body weight, and the impact of physical activity on the prevention of weight gain, weight maintenance, and weight loss over time. We also support the Committee's intent to examine the growing body of evidence on the harms of sedentary behavior,

independent of physical activity levels. The Committee should consider providing recommendations regarding reducing and breaking up sedentary time and increasing light intensity physical activity, in addition to its recommendations pertaining to moderate-to-vigorous intensity activity.

Given that a large proportion of U.S. children and adults do not get enough physical activity, the Committee should dedicate a significant portion of its report to reviewing and recommending evidence-based strategies to help Americans be more active. Actionable recommendations for specific policy, systems, environmental, and behavior change strategies are needed to increase physical activity and reduce sedentary behavior across the lifespan. In addition, targeted strategies are needed to help address the significant disparities in levels of physical activity across populations.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide comments at today's meeting. We look forward to providing more detailed written comments to the Committee in the coming weeks as well.